

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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COMING.

*"What I say unto you I say unto all,—Watch! . . . At
even or at midnight or at the cock-crowing or in the morning."*

"It may be in the evening

When the work of the day is done,
And you've time to sit in the twilight
And watch the sinking sun;

When the long, bright day dies slowly
Over the sea,

And the hour grows quiet and holy
With thoughts of Me, . . .

While you hear the village children
Passing along the street,

Among those thronging footsteps
May come the sound of My feet.

Therefore I tell you,—Watch!

By the light of the evening star
When the room is growing dusky

As the clouds afar,
Let the door be on the latch

In your home;

For it may be through the gloaming
I will come!

"It may be when the midnight

Is heavy upon the land,
And the black waves lying dumbly
Along the sand;

When the moonless night draws close;
And the lights are out in the house;

When the fires burn low and red;

And the watch is ticking loudly

Beside the bed;—

Though you sleep, tired out, on the couch,
Still your heart must wake and watch

In the dark room;

For it may be at midnight

I will come!

"It may be at the cock-crow,

When the night is dying slowly

In the sky,

And the sea is calm and holy,

Waiting for the dawn of the golden sun

Which draweth nigh;

When the mists are on the valleys, shading

The rivers chill,

And My morning star is slowly fading,

Over the hill. . . .

Behold, I say unto you,—Watch!

Let the door be on the latch

In your home;

In the chill before the dawning,

Between the night and morning

I may come!

"It may be in the morning,

When the sun is bright and strong,

And the dew is glittering sharply

Over the little lawn;

When the waves are laughing loudly

Along the shore,

And the birds are singing sweetly

About the door;

With the long day's work before you

You rise up with the sun,

And the neighbors come in to talk a little

Of all that must be done;

But remember that I may be the next

To come in at the door,

To call you from all your busy work

For evermore.

As you work, your heart must watch;

For the door is on the latch

In your room,

And it may be in the morning

I will come!"

So I am watching quietly

Every day.—

Whenever the sun shines brightly,

I rise and say

"Surely it is the shining of His face!"

And look unto the gates of His high place

Beyond the sea;

For I know He is coming shortly

To summon me.

And when a shadow falls across the window

Of my room,

Where I am working my appointed task,
I lift my head to watch the door, and ask
If He is come.

And an angel answers sweetly

In my home,—

"Only a few more shadows,
And He will come."

—B. M.

WHAT HEAVEN IS.

"Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest."—HEB. iv. 2.

A discussion has been going on for some time on the soul and future life; and it is a sign of the large toleration of the times that some of the writers not only glory in expressing a belief that, apart from his body, man has no soul, and no life beyond the grave—an opinion, the open expression of which would, twenty years ago, have been received with outbursts of indignation; but have even arrived at the point of treating with compassionate disdain those who still cling to the traditional belief. Now I do not think it needful to argue with you that you have souls, and that your life is not as the life of the beasts that perish. To the end of time the human race will believe this, though from the dawn of history there have been a few philosophers who disputed it. These speculations have never shaken, will never shake, the fixed convictions of mankind. Those convictions might have been expressed from very early ages in the simple verse of the poet,—

"Life is real, life is earnest,
And the grave is not its goal;
'Dust thou art, to dust returnest,'
Was not spoken of the soul."

We may freely concede that, of the separate existence of the immaterial soul, and our survival beyond "the intolerable indignities of dust to dust," we have no mathematical demonstration to offer. But this fact does not in the slightest degree trouble us, because neither is there any such proof of the existence of a God. It is perfectly easy for a man to say, if he will, "I do not believe in a God." I do not care to offer up any worship, even of the silent sort, even at the altar of "the unknown and the unknowable." I do not even think it worth while to pray that wild prayer once uttered by a criminal upon the scaffold, "O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul." A man may say all this, and plume himself on this melancholy abnegation of man's fairest hopes; on this deliberate suicide of the spiritual faculty; and if he con-

siders such opinions to be a sign of intellectual emancipation, we can offer to him no proof that will necessarily convince him.

We cannot argue about color to the blind. We cannot prove the glory of music to the deaf. If a man shuts his eyes hard, we cannot make him see the sun. "That the blush of morning is fair, that the quietude of grief is sacred, that the heroism of conscience is noble, who will undertake to *prove* to one who does not see it? So wisdom, beauty, holiness, are immeasurable things, appreciable by pure perception, but which no rule can gauge, no argument demonstrate."

My brethren, if you know God, or rather are known of Him, you will need no proof that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and you will not be much troubled by the scepticism of philosophers. When we thus believe in Him whom we have not seen, all else follows. We believe that He did not befool with irresistible longings, that He did not deceive with imaginary hopes, the man whom He had made. We believe that the breath of life which came from Him shall not pass away. We believe that He sent His Son to die for us and to save us. We believe that because He lives we shall live also. We believe; we are content; we do not even ask for further proof. In this belief, which we believe that He inspireth, we shall console ourselves amid all the emptiness and sorrow of life; we shall advance, calm and happy, to the very grave and gate of death.

We *know* not indeed,—but we *believe*. We walk by faith, though we cannot walk by sight. But were the arguments of these philosophers ten thousand times more cogent than they are,—

"What can we do, o'er whom the unbeholding
Hangs in a night wherewith we dare not
cope?"

What but look sunward, and with faces
golden

Speak to each other softly of hope?"

It will take many a ream of agnostic and nihilistic literature to rob us of the conviction with which we say, "I believe in God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; I believe in the Communion of Saints, in the forgiveness of sins, the Resurrection of the body, and the Life Everlasting. Amen."

Well then, my brethren, we believe in heaven: but what is heaven? Our friends die—men die by myriads,—at every ticking of the clock some fifty souls have passed away,—yet not a breath of sound shakes the curtain of impenetrable darkness which hangs be-

tween us and the unseen world. A fair child sighs away his innocent soul, and in a moment, perhaps,—

"He hath learnt the secret hid
Under either pyramid";

but to his parents, in their agony, comes no faintest whisper from the interval gloom. Not to one of all the unnumbered generations whose dust is blown upon the desert winds has it been permitted to breathe one syllable or letter of the dim and awful secret beyond the grave. And yet the faith of man has not been shaken, nor, for all this deep, unbroken silence, has he ever ceased to believe that He who called us into being will bless, will save, will cherish the souls which He hath made. We feel sure He has a new home for us in other worlds.

It is the *fact* which we believe; the details are not revealed to us. And hence each race has fancied its own ideal of heaven. And all Christians, that they may be enabled to give some form to that which cannot be uttered, have dwelt with rapture on the glowing symbols of the poet of the Apocalypse—the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, and her light like unto a stone most precious, even unto a jasper stone; and the gates of pearl, and the foundations of precious stones, and the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, and the Tree of Life, with its leaves for the healing of the nations. Symbols only,—yet exquisite symbols of the poet's vision, which dull philosophies may scorn, but in which a Dante and a Milton delighted; symbols which come back to us with the freshness and the sweetness of childhood, as we sing the hymns, so dear to Christian worship, of "Jerusalem the golden," or "There is a land of pure delight."

Yet even these symbolic passages do not thrill the heart so keenly as others, which speak with scarce a symbol, and simply tell of a life without life's agonies, and the vision of God undarkened by mists of sin. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." "And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads."

There are other conceptions of heaven which do not deal in imagery at all. What may be the physical conditions of heaven we

cannot tell. But so far as heaven is a place at all, its fundamental conception is that it is a place where sin is not. No guilty step may pass the gates of pearl, no polluting presence fling shadows on the golden streets. They who live there are the angels, and just men made perfect, and the spirits of the saints in light. And if we ever get there, we shall be as they; for to be there is to see the face of God, and to see the face of God is to be changed into the same image from glory to glory. There life's stains shall have been purged away; and the gold shall be mixed with dross no longer; nor the fine gold dim. There is no slander there; no envy, no hatred; no malice; no lies. There is no murder there, nor wounds, nor war. The filth of drunkenness is not in that city of God. No bleared and blighted crowds, degraded out of the semblance of humanity, crawl like singed moths, round the flaring houses of multiplied temptations. There are no hearts depraved, corrupted, eaten out by lust; no victims of man's brutal selfishness, no witnesses of his utter shame.

Ah, my brethren, which of us all looking back does not sigh, "I am not all that I might have been; I might have been noble, and I have not been noble; I might have been kind, and I have not been kind; I might have been pure, and I have not been pure"? Would you not think it almost a heaven if, without giving you anything fresh at all, God would but give you back what once He gave? If he would but restore to you the sweet innocent childhood He once bestowed, that having learnt now that sin is anguish, and that good is best, you might not ravage the fair vineyard of your life, or lay waste its inner sanctities? Oh, to desire only, and to do only what is good, without evil being ever present to us! oh, to do perfectly, what here we have but imperfectly attempted! oh, to *be*, what here we have only seemed to be or wished to be! oh, to be honest, true, noble, sincere, genuine, pure, holy to the heart's inmost core! Is not that heaven? is it dull, gross, sensual, selfish, to sigh for that? Is it not a state rather than a place? is it not a temper rather than a habitation? is it not to *be something* rather than to *go somewhere*?

Yes, this, this is heaven. What more we know not. In other stars, amid His countless worlds, for all we know God may have work for us to do. Who knows what radiant ministrations; what infinite activities; what never-ending progress; what immeasurable happiness; what living ecstasies of unimaginable rapture, where all things are lovely, honorable, pure; where there is no moral ugliness; where repulsive squalor, and de-

graded art, and insane desire, and loathly vice, and pinching selfishness, shall be no more; where boyhood shall not so live as to make its own manhood miserable; where manhood shall not so live as to make old age dishonorable; where old age shall not so live as to make death ghastly. 'This, this is heaven!

Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest. For, my brethren, if, as we Christians believe, Christ hath died to give us entrance into such a heaven as this, we must believe the same Gospel which tells us, not obscurely, that it is not a reward but a continuity, not a change but a development. To go *there* you must be *thus*. It is shocking to hear men and women talk glibly of "going to heaven," whose whole lives, and well-nigh every action of their lives,—whose daily words, whose daily deeds, whose very professions,—are disgracing and embittering earth. If we desire heaven we must seek it here—if we love heaven we must love it now. And thou—oh, mean, greedy, avaricious, money-loving soul, whose gaze, even in heaven, would be on the trodden gold of its pavement; and thou, base usurer and defrauder, who, hasting to be rich, carest not how little thou art innocent, and whose path in life is wet with orphans' tears,—what hast thou to do with heaven? there are no cheatings, or swindlings, or hoardings there. And thou, slanderous whisperer, whose soul is venomous with hate and envy; and thou, drunkard, who livest only to drown thy senses in wallowing degradation; and thou, slave of thy lowest lusts, whose uncleanness adds unspeakably to the shames and miseries of earth; and thou who hatest thy brother with all but murderous detestation; and thou, bad youth, whose soul is full of fatal ignorance and sensual conceit, and who art drawing iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-ropes; and all ye, children of wickedness, not slaves only, but willing slaves of Satan, who go as the ox to the slaughter, and as the fool to the correction of the stocks,—if ye talk of heaven, what have ye to do with heaven?

Think you that greed, and malice, and intoxication, and debauchery find entrance there? Is there not a lie in your right hands? Think ye to enter heaven thus in all your vileness, meanness, falsity? Think ye that the apples of Sodom and the clusters of Gomorrah can grow in the same soil with the Tree of Life? Oh, while you know what you are, and are what you are, and yet will not be other than what you are, you would not be happy if God placed you there to-morrow. Every pure look of it would be a burning reproach to you, every rapture of it a burden,

every nobleness a shame. If you went there with heart yet unchanged, you would carry hell with you to heaven, and would make heaven itself a hell. It could only be heaven at all by your absence so long as—oh, mark this—so long as you are what now you are.

But oh, you can be different; you can be converted; you can repent. Burdens to yourselves, curses to the world, you can yet become true sons of God; you, even you, may enter the gates of pearl, and cast no shadow on the golden streets. For does not God love you, even you? Did not He die for you, even you? Your souls are worthless to all but His infinite love, but *He* in His divine pity, did not think them worthless; for *their* life He died. Oh! repent ere it be too late, and be what now you are not, and be all that God meant you to be. "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before God's eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well." Repent; and *then* look toward heaven. Put away the love of money, and ask God to give you His true riches. Put away selfishness, and ask God to give you the Spirit of His holy love. Put away lying, and be sincere. Put away conceit, and in the ashes of your self-abasement, tie round you with knots the sackcloth of humility. Put away impurity, and ask God to give you a clean heart and put a right spirit within you. Ay, so shall you begin to know what heaven is! so shall you begin to have a foretaste of its happiness, even amid the sorrows of earth. So shall there be in your own hearts, amid all darkenesses, a circle of radiant peace.

Oh, you shall need the aid of no symbols for you will think of heaven not as of some meadow of asphodel beside the crystal waters or golden city in the far-off blue, but as an extension, as a development, as an undisturbed continuance of righteousness, and peace, and joy in believing; you shall know that, whatever else it be or mean, heaven means holiness—"heaven means principle," heaven means to be one with God.—F. W. Farrar.

THE STILL HOUR.

Say not, the struggle naught availeth,

The labor and the wounds are vain;

The enemy faints not nor faileth,

And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars.

It may be, in yon smoke concealed,

Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,

And, but for you, possess the field.

For, while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light.
In front the sun climbs slow,—how slowly, . . .
But westward,—look! The land is bright!
—Arthur Hugh Clough.

It is very remarkable that God, Who giveth plenteously to all creatures (He hath scattered the firmament with stars as a man sows corn in his fields, in a multitude bigger than the capacities of human order),—yet, in the distribution of our time, God gives that to us, not as nature gives us rivers, enough to drown us, but drop by drop, minute after minute; so that we never can have two minutes together, but He takes away one when He gives us another. This should teach us to value our time, since God so values it, and, by His small distribution of it, tells us it is the most precious thing we have.—Jeremy Taylor.

Life,—I know not what thou art,
But know that thou and I must part;
And when, or how, or where we met
I own to me's a secret yet.

Life,—we have been long together,
Through pleasant and through cloudy
weather!
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear,—
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;
Then steal away,—give little warning,—
Choose thine own time.
Say not Good-night,—but in some
brighter clime
Bid me Good-morning!

—A. L. Barbauld.

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass., tel. Quincy 1140.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking "Shall I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you have sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed here.

NOTICE.

Please take notice that all letters for the Book Club must be written in ink, and on one side, only, of the paper.

The Cambridge Branch offers the following books. Address Miss E. Clarke, "Locust Hill," Nehoiden Street, Needham, Mass. Books on botany and birds, for children; "Pioneering where the World is Old—Manchuria," Alice Tisdale; "Notre Dame," Victor Hugo; "Marcella," Mrs. Humphry Ward; "The Lady of the Aroostook," William Dean Howells; Twelve Pamphlets, "Hymns and Tunes," Gibbon's "Rome" (six volumes) is offered only to libraries open to the public.

Mrs. William E. Hodge, 27 Biltmore Street, Springfield, Mass., offers "The Science of Happiness," Dr. Henry S. Williams; *Atlantic Monthly* (magazine), 1914 and 1917.

Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 5 Brimmer Street, Boston, Mass., offers "In His Name" and "The Man without a Country" by Edward Everett Hale; "The Wonder Book" by Nathaniel Hawthorne; "Waste Not, Want Not" by Maria Edgeworth; "The Vision of Sir Launfal and other poems" by James Russell Lowell; and "The Lady of the Lake" by Sir Walter Scott.

REQUESTS.

1. A friend of mine gave me a copy of your *Cheerful Letter* and I enjoyed reading it very much. I am on the sick list and would be very glad to get some good novels to read. Will some of the kind friends please send me "Iron Bound" and "The North Shore Watch"? I will read and pass them to some one else. I refer you to Rev. G. W. Tucker, Vonnoy, North Carolina. Mrs. Leva, Vonnoy, N. C.

2. The birthday of Mrs. Ellen Washington, Endicott, Virginia, will be July 26, when she hopes to be remembered with reading and cards.

3. I should be very glad to get some reading,—books, papers, or anything of the kind. I have eight children,—five girls and three boys. Mrs. A. V. Pendleton, Elamsville, Virginia.

4. Miss Grace Parker, Riverside, Virginia (care of the Misses Shields), asks for the "Yellow Dove" and "Mrs. Red Pepper Burns."

5. Mrs. Joseph Wright, Route 2, Ferrum, Virginia, the mother of seven children, will be glad of reading for her family.

6. As a reader of *The Cheerful Letter* I would ask you to be kind enough to insert my name on the Request list, for magazines and books treating on "Story and Photo-play" writing. Alphonse Blaine, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, U.S.A.

7. Mrs. C. W. Cherry, Grapeland, Texas, Route 1, Box 98, has not received any reading for over a year, and will appreciate magazines or books for herself, also suitable reading for her little girl of twelve years.

8. Mrs. Sue Dusenberry, Bumpass, Virginia, will be glad of the *American*. She is a helpless invalid.

9. Several years have passed since I heard from any of the *Cheerful Letter* friends. Will some one write me, especially a business man, as I wish to establish a store, particularly for the many poor people around, and who are from time to time defrauded and cheated by merciless merchants. Felix C. Evangelista, San José, Nueva Ecija, Philippine Islands.

10. Mrs. H. P. Harmon, Decatur, Tennessee, Route 4, will be grateful for any good reading.

11. Mrs. J. W. Marsh, Bear Creek, North Carolina, asks for a Life of Christ, the "Greek Course in English" by Wilkinson, and "Readings in Ancient History" by W. S. Davis.

12. St. Mary's House for Sailors, corner Marginal & Cottage Streets, East Boston, Mass., is always in need of reading matter for the use of the seamen. Current or recent issues of the *Cosmopolitan*, *Outlook*, *Everybody's*, and other popular magazines are much appreciated.

13. Rev. D. J. Bryant, Floyd, Virginia, desires to obtain a copy of Wordsworth's Poems.

14. Mrs. Paul B. Rucker, Amherst, Virginia, asks for any books for her circulating library, especially books suited to the needs of scholars and teachers in the high school. Good books by the best authors are particularly desired.

15. As I have not written to *The Cheerful Letter* for a good while, I wish now to thank again the many friends who gave me much

comfort and cheer while in my suffering with white swellings in my left leg. I am still living in the country; I think it is a good place to live, though it is lonesome for one who cannot walk a step; of course the rest have to be at work. I should again appreciate correspondence with any of the old friends or with new ones. Good wishes to *The Cheerful Letter* and its readers. Mrs. Martha Jane Swasingen, Albemarle, North Carolina, Route 1, Box 43.

NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT.

The reports from the branches are full of interest and I quote from a few:—

East Boston reports that letter-writing has been the smallest part of their work; feeling that they could do better along different lines: could send a bit of cheer to more people by making scrap-books for the soldiers who were sick or wounded. They made and sent away one hundred and thirty, each one having twenty-four pages; also made thirty-two books with short stories; sent out 1,325 post-cards (most of them to children's hospitals) besides valentines, paper dolls, pictures, etc. One other new feature of work this year was that they tried to cheer our own church folks when they were sick or in trouble, either by calling, or sending a bright card, and feel sure that this work has brightened many lives.

Beverly, also, has "carried on." The chairman sends a most interesting account. She has sent paper plates with pictures pasted on them, to the children's ward in the hospital; also corresponded weekly with a young man who spent five years in a hospital; played games with him by mail; and, when she offered a prize, two other patients begged to be allowed to try for it. Letters and reading matter were sent to twenty-eight young men in service. The boys wrote that they absolutely ate the *Literary Digest*, etc.! For a long time the best of our tracts have been sent up in Maine, where they have been read aloud to a little group of people when the minister was preaching in some other town. Calico and cambric pieces have been given to a club of women all over seventy years of age; they, holding all-day sewing meetings made twelve quilts, which were given to the Bangor Red Cross.

Birthday remembrances, postals, packages, letters, and in fact a little of everything have found the way into many a home where such cheer is needed.

Our Christmas work was carried out as in other years, by boxes and bundles sent to

those who had trees for their neighborhoods; also by members remembering their own correspondents. Reading in quantities has been sent to hospitals, camps, ships, car barns, and prisons, besides to many individuals who are ever grateful. One special thing we tried this year to do was making *joke-books* for the wounded or sick soldiers. Many in the early part of the year were sent overseas,—later sent to hospitals here; it is quite impossible to give a definite number, but it goes well into the hundreds. One committee sent out at Christmas-time 2,165 cards and calendars, and at Easter 640. The same Committee again this year adopted the same four French orphans they took last year in memory of two former members of the Cheerful Letter Committee, as an expression of their appreciation of the devotion of these members for many years to the Cheerful Letter Committee. In this Committee is one who has been and constantly is busy making little pillows and knitting many pretty things which must have made glad the hearts of many children overseas. The chairman writes: "She conquers weariness and pain, and compels her sorely stiffened fingers to do her will in this work for others. Very few in this world are honored with a crown of ninety years, and few of those who gain it live to continue helping others."

It is inspiring to note in the financial account of this Committee that they were credited with \$750 to the Fourth Liberty Loan.

Letters from many of our correspondents bear testimony to the great benefits they have received from *The Cheerful Letter*. One man writes: "The books, periodicals, and letters received in the past fifteen years have been more than helpful in my work as a minister; in fact, I can scarcely get along without them. May God grant you greater success and richer blessing in all your work. The watchword ought to be, 'Be strong and of good courage.'"

From a good friend in Maine comes this word: "All we have received has been most acceptable and fully appreciated. I often think what a privilege it would be to live where we could attend a church, especially a Unitarian. There are *no* churches of any kind near here; so any religious reading is wonderfully welcome."

This word from Florida makes me feel that Cheerful Letter work is well worth while: "What has *The Cheerful Letter* been to me! Nearly thirty years ago I came South for my health, bringing enough good New England money to keep me from all financial care during life. In three years it was all

gone through bad titles and poor investments. Since then it has been a constant fight with both poor health and financial worry. I simply could not have endured it all through the long years, had it not been for the encouragement of the Cheerful Letter Band. I can think back over the long years,—a shut-in,—of those bright women giving of their wonderful minds in their strong, sustaining letters and good reading. I am only just one of the thousands to whom you have gone in helpfulness. The idea must have been inspired, for was ever anything so far-reaching?—going quietly into the homes where comfort is so much needed. I know others would love to join me in saying that words cannot express what it means to them. Unless you have been lonely and discouraged, you cannot understand. Then we are enabled to 'pass it on' and it lets the note of helpfulness into our own life. A friend said to me she could not understand the Lord's giving me so much trouble,—what work he could be preparing me for in the next world. I hope He is preparing me to be one of the 'helpers' in a Cheerful Letter band."

Charlotte Brontë once said, "The task that is without difficulty is almost without merit; there is great interest in triumphing over obstacles." Our obstacle this year was to meet the cost of publishing *The Cheerful Letter* paper, for it is a difficult thing to print a good-looking and interesting paper without involving a heavy expense in these times. To Miss Edith Jones and her committee we owe a debt of gratitude for carrying out the idea of Mrs. Bucek in having what they call a "Sunshine" bag to drop pennies in on all the sunny days. It is with pride and satisfaction that we close the year with no deficit! Without the paper the work would be sadly crippled, as this incident will prove: In January a lady offered to help one of our good workers, and subscribed for *The Cheerful Letter*. The next time our worker met her friend, she said her husband threatened "to either burn or hide the paper," she had become so interested she wanted to *answer all the requests*, while he had to pay the postage on the packages sent!

I asked one chairman how she did Cheerful Letter work, and this was her reply: "Can I tell you how I work? No! I just beg and beg and beg,—not money, but magazines and books, from nearly every human being I know; then I go to a friend's house and get the packages ready to mail. To do Cheerful Letter work successfully you must beg first and then work."

The coming year holds many possibilities and we stand ready to make it *the best ever!*

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

WAYSIDE TEXTS.

"Yes, mother was always a very busy woman," an elderly business man said to an old friend of his boyhood. "With eight of us in the family to look after, and all the housework to do, she didn't find much time for books—not even the Bible. She used to read that Sunday afternoons, though, and I've seen her fall asleep from sheer weariness, trying to get through a few verses, the last thing before she went to bed. But mother was always finding wayside texts.

"I think we children all grew up with the feeling that the world was *full of God*—if I may express it that way. I can remember how, when one or two of us went with her to a neighbor's on a bright, starlit winter night, she used to call our attention to the star-studded sky, and I can still hear the awed note in her voice as she said, 'Just to think that *any one* could look at that and then say that there isn't a God!' Sometimes, then, she would make us repeat with her that verse from the Nineteenth Psalm, 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.'

"It was the same with the frost pictures on the window-pane and with the ice-jewelled treetops on the hills above our house. Mother had the soul of a poet, but her unwritten lines always ended with God. She loved flowers, and I can remember exactly how she used to exclaim over the delicate tints of an opening rose, 'What painter could ever mix a color like that!' Perhaps she didn't say Who could, but we all understood.

"Mother also looked for these outshinings and disclosures of God in the persons about her and in the things that happened every day. It always pained her to hear any one condemned indiscriminately, and I can see to this day how she would fidget in her chair and drop stitches in her knitting until she got a chance to put in a word in his favor. And it was surprising how invariably she found good qualities and palliating circumstances that every one else had overlooked. It seemed as if she set out with the conviction that God's image must be somewhere, and never gave up searching until she discovered it.

"Mother's formula for all sorts of disappointments and misfortunes was, 'Well, it will be overruled for the best.' Here again, she seldom brought in God's name explicitly, but none of us failed to comprehend that she saw God's hand guiding the event to an unforeseen issue. And when unexpected bless-

ing came—perhaps merely some bit of good luck, as most persons unthinkingly call it—her face expressed far more than her simple, 'I am sure we ought to be thankful.'

"No doubt that was an utterly unscientific way of looking at things, according to modern ideas, but I know of nothing that I would rather give a boy of mine than what mother gave to us—that intimate sense of a divine personality in everything. It has been a restraint and safeguard in the hour of temptation. It has made prayer as natural and rational to me as asking a neighbor for something I wanted. And then, it's a saner philosophy to live by than any I've found elsewhere. It gives a man courage to take things as they come, without being too much upset by hard luck or losing his head when it's all the other way. Besides, looking for God everywhere grows into a habit of the soul, and gives you a new point of view from which to look at men. You stop taking a magnifying-glass to pick flaws in a good character, and find yourself seeking just as hard to find something Godlike and noble in a bad one."

—*The Youth's Companion.*

CHILDREN'S CLASSICS.

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN.

(Concluded.)

IX.

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;

So did the Corporation too.

For council dinners made rare havoc
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gypsy coat of red and yellow!

"Beside," quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,

"Our business was done at the river's brink;

We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink,

And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.

Besides, our losses have made us thrifty.
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

X.

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
"No trifling! I can't wait, beside!
I've promised to visit by dinner time

Bagdad, and accept the prime
Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's rich
in,
For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor:
With him I proved no bargain-driver,
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe after another fashion."

XI.

"How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I
brook
Being worse treated than a Cook?
Insulted by a lazy ribald
With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there till you burst!"

XII.

Once more he stept into the street,
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
Never gave the enraptured air)
There was a rustling that seemed like a
bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and
hustling;
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes
clattering,
Little hands clapping and little tongues
chattering,
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley
is scattering,
Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and
laughter.

XIII.

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council
stood
As if they were changed into blocks of
wood,
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by,
—Could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
But how the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daugh-
ters!
However, he turned from South to West,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was the joy in every breast.
"He never can cross that mighty top!
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop!"

When, lo, as they reached the mountain-
side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced and the children
followed,
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.

Did I say, all? No! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say,—
"It's dull in our town since my playmates
left!

I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me.
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks
here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings:
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And found myself outside the hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more!"

XIV.

Alas, alas! for Hamelin!
There came into many a burgher's pate
A text which says that heaven's gate
Opes to the rich at as easy rate
As the needle's eye takes a camel in!
The Mayor sent East, West, North, and
South,
To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,
Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavor,
And Piper and dancers were gone forever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear,
"And so long after what happened here
On the Twenty-second of July,
Thirteen hundred and seventy-six:"
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat,
They called it the Pied Piper's Street—
Where any one playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labor.
Nor suffered they hostility or tavern
To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern
They wrote the story on a column,

And on the great church-window painted
 The same, to make the world acquainted
 How their children were stolen away,
 And there it stands to this very day.
 And I must not omit to say
 That in Transylvania there's a tribe
 Of alien people who ascribe
 The outlandish ways and dress
 On which their neighbors lay such stress,
 To their fathers and mothers having risen
 Out of some subterraneous prison
 Into which they were trepanned
 Long time ago in a mighty band
 Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land;
 But how or why, they don't understand.

XV.

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
 Of scores out with all men—especially
 pipers!

And, whether they pipe us free from rats
 or from mice,

If we've promised them aught, let us keep
 our promise!

—Robert Browning.

NATURAL HISTORY.

UNDERSTANDING A HORSE.

Kitchener is a very beautiful, strong bay horse, with black points, and a beautiful black mane and tail. For a time he was kept for riding only, but about a year ago his master said he would have to be broken in for driving, and he had to help with light work on the farm as well. Now Kitchener is very strong and very gentle, so he made no trouble when put to his new work as long as he was gently treated. But any rough treatment quickly puts him out.

Sometimes I go to help the farmers during my holidays, and a week or two ago I went to see if there was anything I could do in the harvest fields. I was told to "cock up" the rakings in a certain wheat-field. There I went and found poor Kitchener yoked to the rake, and protesting at the indignity in the most powerful horse language he knew. If he came to a stiff bit he stood stock still, with his ears laid back, and would not try to go on.

His driver, a soldier on harvest leave, would shout at him angrily, but it made no difference. Then he jerked the reins savagely. Kitchener replied by gently rearing, upon which his driver slashed his back with the reins, and then Kitchener quietly raised his hind-legs for a change. But he gently refused to go forward until the soldier got down and led him for a bit.

The same performance took place at every turn when the ends of the field were reached!

and so it took a very long time to finish the field, and by that time the patience of both horse and man was quite exhausted. I offered to lead Kitchener a bit, but it would have been beneath the soldier's dignity to have a girl to help him, so he politely refused. When at last he had finished, Kitchener was covered with white lather, and looked the picture of equine unhappiness, and, I must confess it, very sulky. His driver mopped his brow, and said to me: "This horse is absolutely useless for this job. If I'd only had a sensible cart-horse, I'd have finished a couple of hours ago."

The next afternoon I went to help again, and was asked if I would try to rake an oat-field with Kitchener. I wondered what would happen, but decided to try. So I went into the stable, and petted him a little, then put the tackle on him, and, taking him into the field, yoked him to the rake. Poor old fellow, he looked so disgusted. However, he started well, and went straight down the field to the hedge. At the turn he flung his head round, and curled up his lip, evidently expecting the hated jerk on the reins. But I talked to him gently, and pulled him round quite lightly, and so we managed very well. But at the next turn the stubble was rather thick, so the rake went very heavily, and, just as before, Kitchener stood still. When I tried to urge him on, he gave a very tiny rear, but I did not jerk him, nor shout, nor slash him. Instead, I got down, and went to his head and petted him and kissed his soft nose, and explained to him that we must go on. But I did not lead him, because I wanted him to get into the habit of obeying me from the seat. So I climbed back again, talked to him once more, and he went on quietly.

I had to get off and reason with him three times, and after that he went on as if born to the work, only needing a little encouragement at parts. We finished that field soon after tea, and were then sent off to begin another, where the men were still carrying. The soldier, who had all the trouble the day before, came to ask me how I was getting on with "that there awkward horse," and I was truly able to say that I could not wish for a better one. He watched me do a turn or two with the reins tied up by my side, for by that time Kitchener knew exactly what I required him to do, and obeyed my voice.

The soldier asked me if I had cast a spell over the horse or performed a miracle, but I replied, "I just loved him and treated him as a reasoning being." When we finished work the farmer was very pleased, because we had done much more than the soldier had done.

the day before in the same amount of time. Kitchener, though hot and tired, had not gathered at all, and I was so pleased to have such a convincing proof that kindness pays. Since then I have done all the raking with the dear old fellow, and we are the best of friends.—*Mildred Whicker, in The Little Animals' Friend, London.*

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Address everything relating to the Amusement Column to Mr. Henry A. Jenks, 238 Willow Ave., West Somerville, Mass. Contributors are requested to write on one side of the paper only. Write name and address plainly (not necessarily for publication), and send the answers to the puzzles on a separate slip of paper.]

SHERLOCK HOLMES EXAMINATION.

1. In what place did Dr. Watson first meet Sherlock Holmes?
2. According to the latest information, where is Holmes now, how is his health, and what is he doing?
3. Which one of his cases, mentioned early by Dr. Watson, was afterwards written, apparently because its title allured and fascinated some devoted Sherlockians?
4. What were Dr. Watson's early impressions of Holmes's education and general information?
5. Were these impressions borne out by longer acquaintance?
6. Was Holmes a university man? If so, what university?
7. Did Watson always represent himself as supremely stupid?
8. In what two other stories, not of the Sherlock Holmes series, are the opinions of Holmes quoted anonymously?
9. Approximately how many other cases of Holmes, never related by Dr. Watson, are nevertheless mentioned by him by name? Name ten of them.
10. What case enabled Holmes to take his 'first stride' toward eminence in his profession as detective?
11. What, in Holmes's opinion, was the strangest case he ever handled?
12. Name four of his cases which originated in America.
13. Where did Holmes keep his cigars? his tobacco?
14. What was Mrs. Watson's maiden name?
15. How long was Sherlock absent at the time of his supposed death? Where was he?

16. Is anything known of his ancestry or hereditary influences?

17. (a) What did Sherlock's brother, Mycroft, do? (b) What was his club?

18. What first gave Holmes the idea to take up detective work as a profession?

19. Name three of the cases which involve murder; three in which robbery is involved; three which concern other crimes; three in which no crime is involved.

—*Boston Transcript.*

Answers to puzzles in the June number.

I. BEHEADINGS: 1. Swing—wing. 2. Chart—hart. 3. Pear—ear. 4. Frail—rail. 5. Sprint—print. 6. Sharper—harper.

II. CROSS-WORD ENIGMA: Lloyd George.

III. SOBRIQUETS: 1. Philadelphia. 2. Washington. 3. Springfield, Ill. 4. Buffalo, N.Y. 5. Pittsburgh. 6. Utica, N.Y.

IV. PECULIAR ARITHMETIC: Memorial Day.

V. WHAT CAPES: 1. Cape May. 2. Cape Horn. 3. Cape Wrath. 4. Cape Fear. 5. Cape of Good Hope. 6. Cape Farewell.

Men's griefs are as different as men's lives are. To the man who is all wrapped up in this world, griefs come as the ghosts come to the poor narrow-minded churl, to plague and tease him, to disturb the circumstances and habits of his living, to pull down his fences, and make strange, frightful noises in his quiet rooms. All is petty. To him to whom life is but an episode, a short stage in the existence of eternity, who is always cognizant of the great surrounding world of mystery, grief comes as angels came to the tent of Abraham. Laughter is hushed before them. The mere frolic of life stands still. But the soul takes the grief in as a guest, washes its travel-stained feet, spreads its table with the best food, gives it the seat by the fireside, and listens reverently for what it has to say about God from Whom it came.—*Phillips Brooks.*

... More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore,
let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or
goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of
prayer
Both for themselves and those who call
them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

We look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.—*Saint Paul.*

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

Chairman of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to be chosen. The next meeting will be October 3, 1919.

Editor of The Cheerful Letter, Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 5 Brimmer St., Boston, Mass.

Book Club Secretary, Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

Any minister (of any sect) who receives this paper is cordially invited to distribute the copies of *The Cheerful Letter* received among lonely members of his parish, shut-ins or invalids of whom he may know. He is also invited to write to our headquarters (see address on this page) and give names and addresses of those who may be cheered and helped by becoming our correspondents.

No *theology* is disseminated in our paper. All the religious matter is intended merely to strengthen, cheer, and comfort those in need of such practical help.

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